



# TRUST AND AUTONOMY SUPPORTING TEACHER'S PROFESSIONAL ROLE

**Framtidens lærerrolle i Norden**

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# ORIENTATION

- Characteristics of teacher's professional work
- Teacher's authentic professional action
  
- Autonomy in teacher's professional work
- Trust as a precondition for teacher's work
  
- Conclusions



# TEACHERS AS MAKERS OF THE MANY

## **Teachers as key persons at schools and in the society** (Juvonen & Toom, 2021)

- educating students and facilitating their learning,
- constructing and implementing curriculum,
- launching innovations, developing schools

## **Teachers' professional responsibilities** (e.g. Toom & Husu, 2012; 2018)

- responsible and ethical code of conduct
- professional development, facilitation of learning of others
- inquiring orientation towards teacher's work

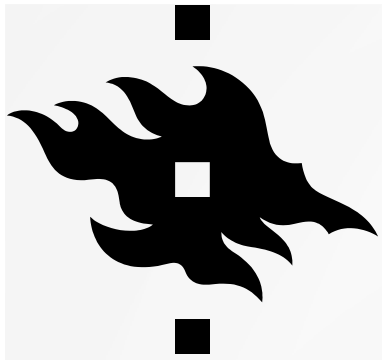
## **Teachers' interaction with community and society** (Juvonen & Toom, in press)

- Promoting societal changes



# TEACHING IS “A THINKING PRACTICE”

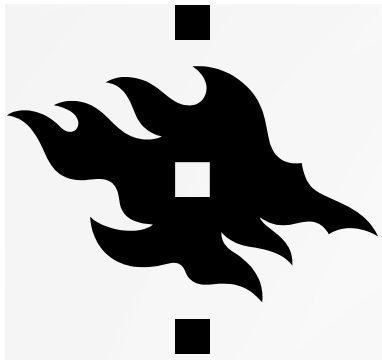
- Teacher’s work is demanding knowledge-intensive academic work in multiple social contexts, human relations and interactions
- It includes long-term systematic educational processes as well as quick and changing interactions with students and colleagues that require continuous problem solving and decision-making
- Availability and changed usage of knowledge, learning-focused approach to teaching, digitalisation, and increasing diversity challenge teachers and encourage them to learn continuously (Husu & Toom, 2017)
- For their everyday work, teachers need strong expertise and *professional agency* (Pyhältö et al., 2011; Toom, 2017)
- The core practice of teaching integrates reasoning and knowing with action (cf. Lampert, 1998; Loewenberg Ball, 2000)



# TEACHER'S WORK PRESUPPOSES STRONG PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

- Teacher's work presupposes professional expertise in
  - learning and instruction
  - interaction
  - wellbeing
  - school development

(Soini et al., 2016; Toom, 2017)



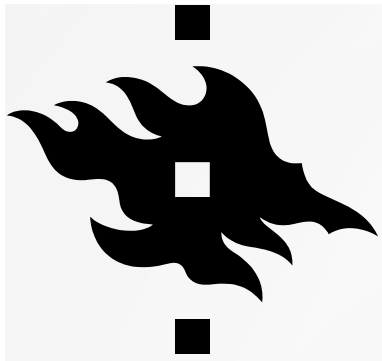
# TEACHER'S AUTHENTIC PROFESSIONAL ACTION: PERSON IN A TEACHER'S ROLE

**Teachers' professional role requirements** (cf. Buchmann, 1986; Beck, 2008; Toom & Husu, 2012)

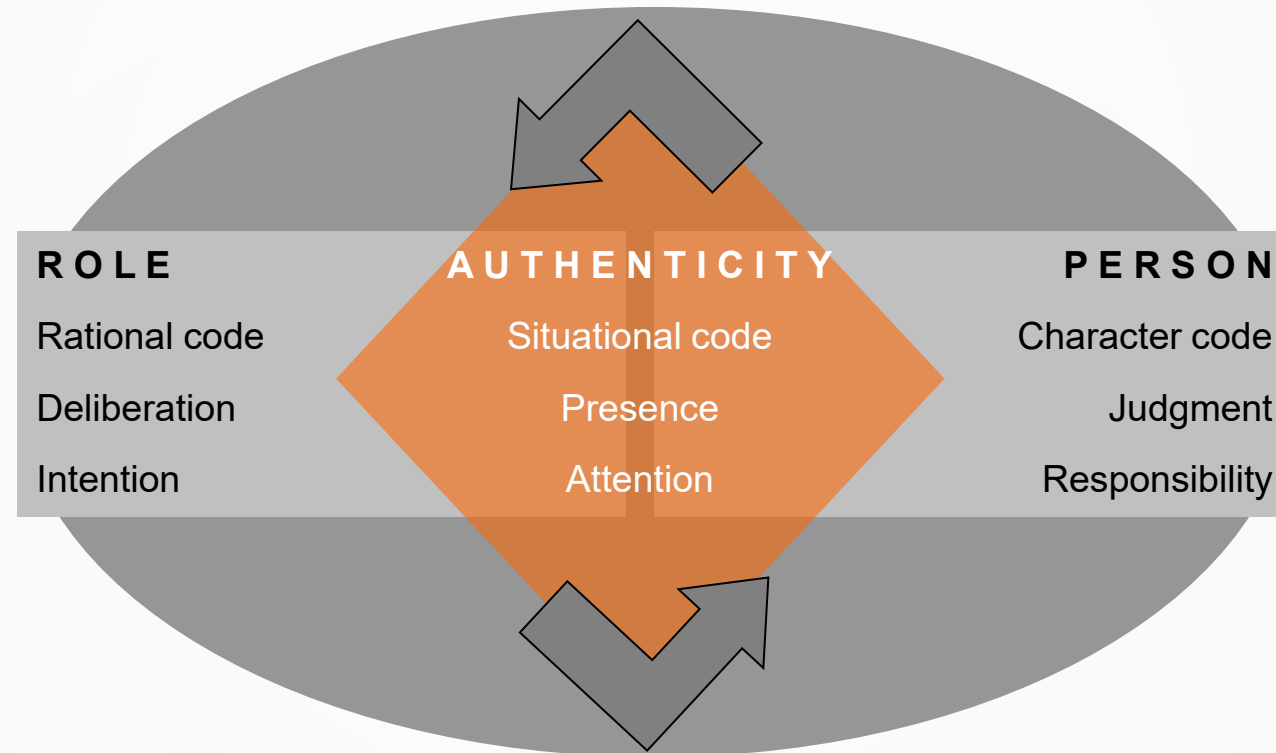
- Societal expectations, norms and regulations set for teachers' professional work
- Deliberate professional action, support and caring of pupils (Husu & Tirri, 2007; Husu, 2002)
- Intentional pedagogical collaboration and development of school with colleagues

**Teachers' personal characteristics**

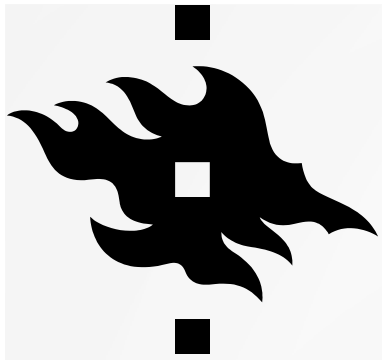
- Realisation of teacher's own strengths and professional identity (Kumpulainen, Toom & Saalasti, 2010, 2012)
- Reflective approach towards teacher's work, pondered professional judgments (Kansanen et al., 2000; Niemi, 1998; Husu, Toom & Patrikainen, 2008)
- Strong and ethical commitment to teacher's profession (Niemi, 2011)



# ROLE OVER PERSON: AUTHENTICITY IN TEACHING (CF. BUCHMANN, 1986)



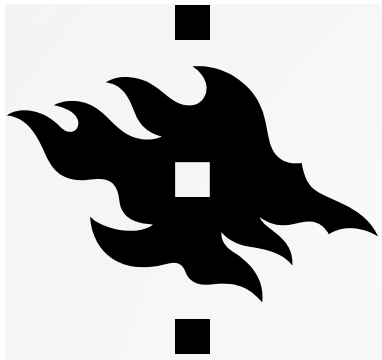
(Husu & Toom, 2008; 2010; Toom & Husu, 2012)



# TEACHER'S PROFESSIONAL WORK REQUIRES AUTONOMY

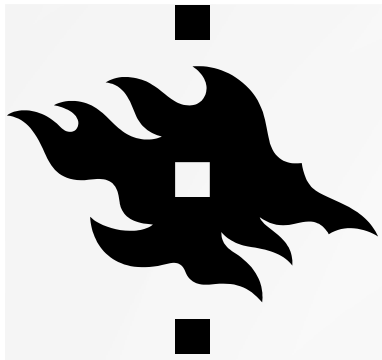
- Autonomy is an essential cornerstone allowing teachers to do their educational work
- Autonomy allows teachers to do their work authentically: a person acting in a teacher's role
- It is fundamental that teachers as professionals define the foundational values and consider their enactment
- Autonomy “rests” on the collectivity and operates within the professional and societal norms





# TRUST AS A PRECONDITION FOR TEACHER'S PROFESSIONAL WORK

- Trust in teachers as professionals in the society and communities (Zeichner et al., 2016)
  - Policy makers, stakeholders, parents
- Trust of school leadership on teachers: providing support and freedom
- Trust as a precondition for collegial co-operation among teachers
- Trust between teachers and pupils (cf. Troman, 2000; Hargreaves, 1998)



# EDUCATING WITHIN A SOCIETY: THE MINDSET OF THE NORDIC EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

- Democratic and consensus-seeking ethos of decision-making in the issues of educational policy
- Respect for learning and education (Niemi, 2012; Simola, 2005)
- Trust in teachers and education on various levels
- Hope for a better society and individual life
  - Education as a resource of hope (cf. Amsler, 2009; Sahlberg, 2007)
  - Brighter individual and societal futures through education



# CONCLUSIONS

- Teachers are key persons at schools and society – to promote student learning and make change
- Teaching is “a thinking practice”
- Teachers need strong expertise and professional agency in their work
- Autonomy allows teachers to act authentically
- Broad trust on various systemic levels is a cornerstone for teachers professional work
  
- How do we maintain and enhance Nordic mindset in education also in the future?



# THANK YOU!

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## Research Projects

Early Career Teachers' Professional Agency Across Four European Countries – Key for Sustainable Educational Change? (2018-2022, Academy of Finland)

PIONEERED - Pioneering policies and practices tackling educational inequalities in Europe (2021-2024, Horizon 2020)

SCIREARLY – Policies and practices based on scientific research for reducing underachievement and early school leaving in Europe (2022-2025, HORIZON 2021)